

Together

We Can Make

A Difference



As a pediatrician, family physician, nurse, or other health care practitioner, you may be faced with many critical responsibilities, among the most sensitive, identifying a child with specific or potential disabilities.

Your Role as a Health Care Provider

- Assist in the child find and early intervention referral process.
- Provide assessment and diagnostic evaluations.
- Support the early intervention Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).
- Continue with medical care of the child.

Help families get the Early Start their child needs toward maximizing their development by referring them to a regional center or local education agency. Your immediate referral of a child with a significant delay or suspected disability helps ensure that the child and family, if eligible, will benefit from California Early Start.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY EARLY START

California Early Start provides many necessary early intervention and related services based on assessed need of the child. Services may be provided in the home, child care or other community settings where typically developing children participate. Your local education agency, regional center, and family resource center work together to provide these services to eligible children and their families.

SERVICES MAY INCLUDE:

assistive technology devices/services	occupational therapy	speech-language pathology
audiology services	physical therapy	transportation services
family training, counseling and home visits	psychological services	vision services
some health services	respite	others as needed
nursing	service coordination	medical services, for diagnostic or evaluative purposes only
nutrition counseling	social work services	
	special instruction	

For general information about California Early Start call

800/515-BABY

or visit www.dds.ca.gov/earlystart

E-mail: earlystart@dds.ca.gov



California Early Start is an interagency system of coordinated early intervention services administered by the Department of Developmental Services in collaboration with the California Department of Education.



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C A L I F O R N I A

EARLY
START

**A statewide
interagency system
of coordinated early
intervention services
for infants and toddlers
with disabilities
and their families**

**THE ROLE OF
THE HEALTH CARE
PROVIDER**

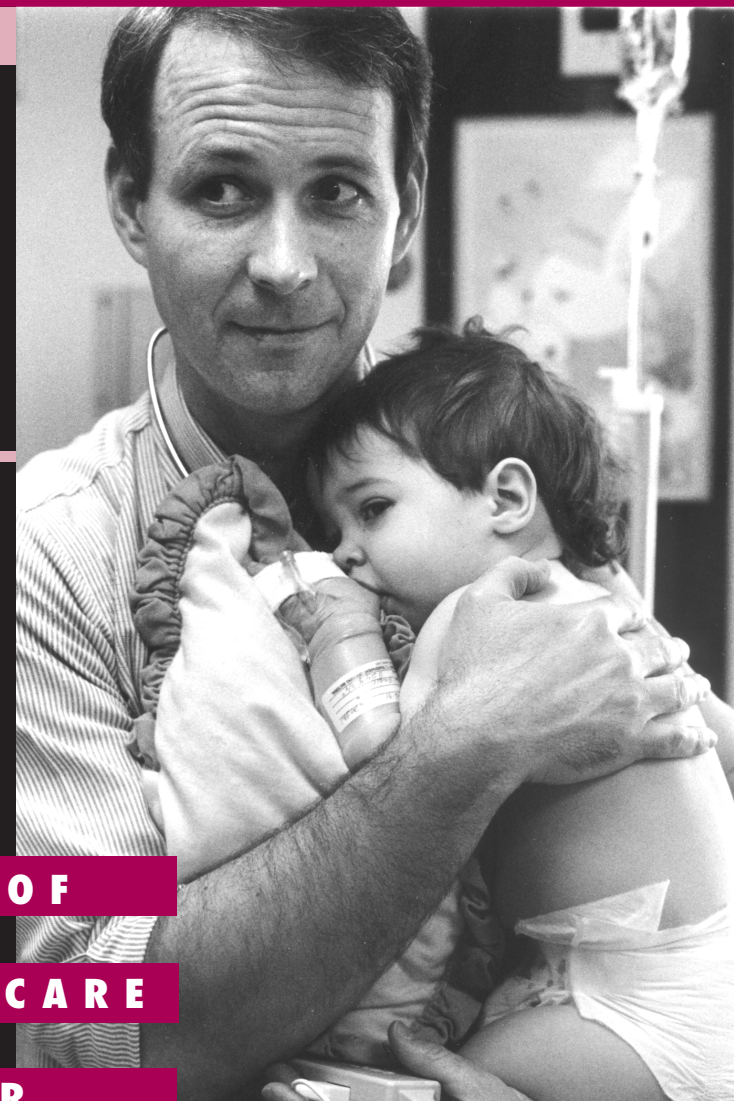


Photo courtesy of NorthBay Healthcare System, Fairfield, California

Department of Developmental Services

WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Early intervention promotes a child’s growth and development and supports the family during the critical early years. It is not a cure for disabilities or risk conditions. Early intervention services to eligible children and families are federally mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and in California by the California Early Intervention Services Act.



Research shows that participation in family-centered, early intervention services during the first three years of life can have significant effects on the cognitive development and social adjustment of low birthweight, premature children and on the overall development of young children with disabilities.

As a health care provider, you are an important member of the early intervention team. Your immediate responsibility under these statutes is to refer a child for eligibility evaluation and assessment to identify the potential need for early intervention services.

RESEARCH
SHOWS
EARLY INTERVENTION
HAS
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ON
COGNITIVE
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AND
SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

WHO MAY BENEFIT FROM EARLY START?



Infants and toddlers from birth to 36 months may be eligible for and benefit from early intervention services if one of the following factors is present:

Significant developmental delay in one or more of these areas:

- cognitive development
e.g. limited interest in environment, limited interest in play and learning
- physical and motor development, including vision and hearing
e.g. hypertonia, dystonia, asymmetry
- communication development
e.g. limited sound repertoire, limited responses to communication with others
- emotional-social development
e.g. unusual responses to interactions, impaired attachment, self-injurious behavior
- adaptive development
e.g. feeding difficulties

Established risk conditions of known etiology or those conditions expected to result in significant developmental problems such as

- chromosomal disorders,
- inborn errors of metabolism, or
- neurological disorders,
- visual and hearing impairments.

High risk of having a substantial developmental disability due to a combination of risk factors such as

- prematurity (less than 32 weeks gestation and/or low birth weight of less than 1,500 grams),
- asphyxia or need for ventilator assistance,
- central nervous system infection or abnormality,
- biomedical insult (including, but not limited to, injury, accident or illness which may seriously or permanently affect developmental outcome), or
- parent with a developmental disability.

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REFERRAL CONSIDERATIONS

Referral is a phone call away. It can be based on objective criteria or your clinical judgment. It’s important to be aware that statutes require a referral to be made within two days to either the regional center or local education agency. When determining the need to make a referral for early intervention services, consider the following:

- readiness of the infant and family to benefit from services
- stabilization of the infant’s or toddler’s medical condition
- the need for additional assessment to document developmental delay or disability

Recommendations for Health Care Providers

- Continue with medical management.
- Consult with and provide reports to professionals on the early intervention team.
- Support the family in obtaining needed services for their child and themselves.

What Happens Next?

Within 45 days after your referral is received

- a service coordinator is assigned,
- an evaluation for eligibility is completed,
- an assessment is conducted for program planning,
- a peer parent contact may be available, and
- a meeting will be held to develop the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) to initiate child and family services.

